



# *Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission*

## NEWS RELEASE

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*Working towards healthy, self-sustaining populations of all Atlantic coast fish species, or successful restoration  
well in progress by the year 2015*

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### **ASMFC Lobster Board Approves Addendum IV**

New York, NY – The Commission's American Lobster Management Board approved Addendum IV to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan. The Addendum establishes management measures for Areas 2 and 3, and modifies vent sizes and the interpretation of the most restrictive rule for multi-area fishermen. In addition, the Board approved Massachusetts' request for conservation equivalency in the Outer Cape Management Area.

Addendum IV was initiated to address significant stock declines in lobsters of all sizes in Area 2 (waters off of Rhode Island and Massachusetts). The management measures include gauge size increases and effort control, neither of which will be implemented until 2005. Gauge sizes will increase incrementally from 2005 to 2008, ending at a minimum gauge size of 3 1/2". The Board approved a proposal by the Area 2 Lobster Conservation Management Team (LCMT) designed to decrease the number of traps in Area 2 over time through a trap transferability program. Reductions would occur through passive removals when permits and traps are transferred.

For offshore waters (Area 3), the Board approved a LCMT proposal for a new trap transferability program and a 10% trap reduction by 2008. This program would allow Area 3 fishermen to transfer traps to other Area 3 fishermen. The Board discussed the overall trap cap for the program and decided to initiate Addendum V to address the issue.

Addendum IV includes a vent size increase for circular vents associated with the 3 3/8" minimum gauge size to 2 5/8" as well as specifying the required vent sizes for minimum gauge sizes of 3 1/2". These vent size changes are based on a vent selectivity study by the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries.

In other business, the Board approved a Massachusetts conservation equivalency proposal for the Outer Cape Cod Management Area. Instead of allocating traps as outlined in Addendum III, the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries will be using 1999 through 2001 as qualifying years to identify potential participants and will allocate traps based on fishing performance during 2000 – 2002, with pounds as the qualifying parameter.

The Commission will be conducting a peer reviewed stock assessment for American lobster in 2004. This stock assessment will consider new modeling approaches and input parameters such as natural mortality.

Copies of the Addendum will be available January and can be obtained from the Commission's website at [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org) on the American lobster page. For more information, please contact Carrie Selberg, FMP Coordinator, at (202)289-6400 or <[cselberg@asmfc.org](mailto:cselberg@asmfc.org)>.

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The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission was formed by the 15 Atlantic coastal states in 1942 for the promotion and protection of coastal fishery resources. The Commission serves as a deliberative body of the Atlantic coastal states, coordinating the conservation and management of nearshore fishery resources, including marine, shell and anadromous species.

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